(c) The Government introduced a package of trade policy reforms aimed at strengthening of export incentives, eliminating substantial volume of import licensing and optimal import compression, REP licenses have been replaced by a new instrument named Exim Scrips. These will be the means of obtaining access to certain categories of import of raw materials, components and spares. The system of advance licensing as an instrument of export promotion has also been strengthened. Government have decided to allow established exporters to open foreign currency accounts in approved banks and allow established exporters to raise external credits, pay for export related imports from such accounts and credit export proceeds to such accounts. Besides, Government have taken other steps which include reducing controls through licensing, simplification of procedures for export, activisation of Board ofT rade, bilateral discussion with selected countries, inter-action with national organisations of trade and industry, etc.

767. [*Transferred to the 11th March, 1992.*]

Trade in rupee convertibility with Soviet Union

768. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:
DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAM NARESH YADAV:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether arrangements are being worked out for continuing trade with republics of Soviet which formed part of erstwhile USSR;

(b) which republics have agreed to honour erstwhile Soviet Union's commitment to accept payment in Rupees for India's purchases in fields of defence, power, coal and steel;

(c) what is being done to resolve vexed issue of Rupee Rouble parity and liquidation of technical credit; and

(d) whether Government are prepared for trading in convertible currency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Russian Federation and Ukraine have agreed, in principle, to the continuance of rupee payment for purchases made in these sectors.

(c) These financial issues are done for further discussion between Russia and India shortly.

(d) The new trading arrangements would permit trade in convertible currencies also, besides trade in rupees, barter, counter trade and the like.

SC/ST Post lying vacant under various Undertakings, Boards under the Ministry of Commerce

769. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI:
KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of posts reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes that are lying vacant in various public sector undertakings, Boards and other institutes under the administrative control of his Ministry;

(b) the time when these have been lying vacant; and

(c) what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken by Government to fill up these vacant posts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and the same will be laid on the Table of the House.

Export of protective foods

770. PROF. I. G. SANADI:
SHRI PRABHAKAR B. KORE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been promoting exports of various foods such